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THE
SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM

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THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM



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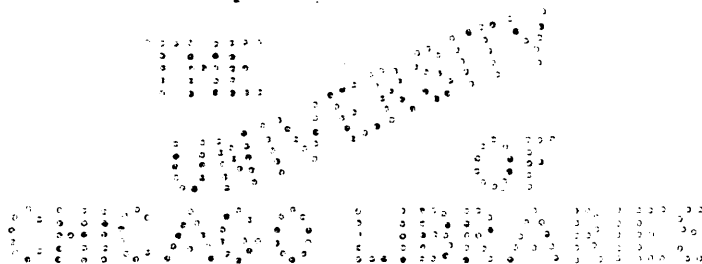
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THE SACRAMENTAL SYSTEM

By the Reverend
C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

Introduction by
NEIL McNEIL
Archbishop of Toronto



NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1928

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✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES,

Archbishop, New York

New York, January 14, 1928.

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Set up and electrotyped.
Published February, 1928.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE STRATFORD PRESS, INC.

INTRODUCTION

IN this little book the Rev. Father Martindale has taken great pains to come down to the mental level of the man in the street. He makes it very clear that sacrificial and sacramental worship is in accord with the nature of man, and that our human nature requires external forms of symbol and ceremony in religion. He leads the reader to expect and to find that in fact our Lord did make ample provision for such human needs.

The natural man requires symbol and ceremony; but the sinful man requires more, namely, redemption from sin by the grace of God. It was for this especially that our Saviour came into the world, and, when he provided symbol and ceremony, he made them the channels of his saving grace. This is the thesis of the book.

We need symbols and ceremonies as individuals, but we need them more as members of society. Every society feels the need of some form of initiation. A nation needs a flag as the symbol of its unity and appointed

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days for commemoration of great national events. Father Martindale expresses this in the case of the Jews (page 7) by saying that they as a people were held together by their worship of one God, by tribal and national and family ceremonies, and by great festivals like the Pasch, the Day of Atonement, and Pentecost. When, therefore, we know that Christ came to "cleanse to himself a people" and impart truth and grace by means of a world-wide society, which He called His Church, and that His solemn prayer between the Supper and the Cross was for union among the members of this society, we should be sadly disappointed, even from a human point of view, if He had failed to provide those means of social union which we call symbols and ceremonies; and, from a Christian point of view, if He had failed to make them a means of preserving truth and of imparting grace. The consciousness of this connection of social strength with symbol and ceremony is well illustrated by the action of those civil rulers who sought to reduce the Church to a function of the State. Two Sacraments suit their purpose better than seven.

The New Testament is not the only means of knowing what Christ taught. The daily life and tradition of the Church is also a

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source of Christian knowledge. The Church saw and heard and remembers Christ. During forty days after the Resurrection, the Acts tell us, our Lord appeared to the Apostles, "speaking of the Kingdom of God." That is, He discoursed with them about the Church. Some of His acts and words during this period are recorded in the Gospels. Thus, St John (xx 22) tells of the institution of the Sacrament of Penance. As St Paul expresses it, he gave to them the Ministry of Reconciliation (II Cor. v). Father Martindale refers to this on pages 47 and 68. It may surprise some readers that on page 48 he states that, except in the case of Baptism and the Eucharist, we can never know precisely how our Lord instituted the seven Sacraments. This is true of some of them. Confirmation is an instance. Historically we only know from the practice and the words of the Apostles and their successors that Christ did institute Confirmation. It is true even of Penance in the sense that St John does not tell us precisely how the power to forgive sin then imparted to the Apostles was to be administered, whereas, in the case of Baptism and the Eucharist, the very ceremonies of administration are stated.

✠ NEIL MCNEIL,
Archbishop of Toronto.

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CHAPTER I

MAN'S APPROACH TO GOD

SINCE these books make a series, and follow one another in a definite order, I might assume that readers of this one have read those that come before it, and therefore, the one that treats of the nature of Man.

However, I must be forgiven if I recall the essential point of that book. Man is not an Automaton, nor an Ape, nor an Angel. By this I mean, a man is not just a piece of mechanism, like a steam-engine; nor yet is he merely an animal, that has but instinct and cannot think nor choose. Nor yet is he an angel, for angels are simply Minds—they have no bodies: “a spirit hath not flesh nor bones as ye see *me* having,” said our Lord, when after the Resurrection the Apostles thought they were seeing a ghost. Man is

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Body-Soul. He is flesh-and-Blood, *and* mind. Mind means the power of thinking, and the power of choosing. And in Man, Mind works along with the brain, in a way which we need not here discuss, provided we remember it; and when I say "brain," I include all the rest that man's living body involves—the nervous system, the senses, the instincts. Therefore, whenever the ordinary living man feels, he also thinks; and when he thinks, his imagination and his emotions and his nervous system, and in fact all that is in him, respond and become active at least in some degree.

Therefore when you are dealing with man, it is quite useless to try to separate him into two, and pretend he is either just a body, or just a mind. This book will show that God, according to the Catholic Faith, does not do so: but first, it is worth seeing that man, when he has dealt with God, or has sought to get into touch with him—in a word, to "worship" him—has always acted in accordance with this double nature of his: or, on the rare occasions when he has tried to do otherwise, has got into grave trouble.

I speak, of course, of the normal man behaving normally, and not of morbid, nor of mystical states; and of course, I am speaking of man in this life, and not in the next.

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i

From what I have said, you will see that man cannot so much as *think* of God as if man were merely Mind. He has to use his brain, and when he does this, he makes pictures with his imagination—even today, after all our training, we make some sort of picture to ourselves when we say the word "God." Even the Scriptures are full of phrases that represent God as though he were like ourselves—our Lord's eternal exaltation in heaven is described as "sitting down at the right hand of God," "not," as the Catechism reminds us, "that God has hands." He is a Spirit: but we, being men, have to picture him to ourselves somehow. As a matter of fact, the human mind has always risen to the thought of God from the experience of material objects—that is, of course, save in the case of direct and special revelations: but these are abnormal and I am speaking only of the normal. For example, a quite uneducated man, call him a "savage" if you like, is quite able to rise from the spectacle of limited, changing things to the notion of that great Cause which must be at the back of them.

That he can do so, is defined by the Vatican Council, though of course, that Council does not say that all men as it were hatch the

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notion of God from what they see around them, or that they do it in the same way, or successfully. In fact, experience shows that though the most simple man can quite well use the sight and touch of things in order to reach a notion of a God who made them, and keeps them, and arranges them, yet he can quite well go on to misuse his mind on the subject, and make many a mistake about it. For example, if he sees a violent storm, or a raging mountain fire, or volcano, he will very easily proceed to say that the God who is responsible for this must be not only powerful, but cruel or destructive. The fact remains, that he has got, by means of his mind, to the thought of God, by way of his senses; and then has proceeded, also because of what he sees and feels, to use his mind awry, and to draw deductions that careful training would show him to be unwarranted.

Let us therefore keep to this conclusion—When a man so much as begins to think about God, he always starts from something that touches his senses, and he can never altogether exclude the fact that he is Body as well as Mind, and in his life never will so exclude it. Nor should he. It is quite useless to try to pretend you are something that you are not, and God does not mean you to try. Why should he? If he has made you a

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man, he does not wish you to behave as if you were something quite different, like an ape, or like an angel. Some men practically behave like the former, and you call them "sensualists." A minority of students and over-cultured persons would like to behave as if they were just minds—you call them "intellectualists." Each sort is lop-sided. You are sometimes tempted to think that the latter sort is in the greater danger. For the sensualist may always pull himself up—human nature does not take kindly to a complete collapse into animalism. But the man who despises material things, is quite likely to experience a sudden fatigue, to give up, and to suffer a "reaction," and become extremely greedy for the good things of life. If he does not, he is none the less quite out of touch with ordinary men and women.

ii

Now when a man is very convinced of anything, he always wants to *do* something about it. If he is a simple person, he probably does it at once, and rather noisily. With education, he may behave with greater restraint: but if he never tends to *express* himself, as we say, he is probably a languid and colourless person. If children are pleased, they jump and dance. When a man feels in

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good form, he sings in his bath. When he is in love he wants to kiss the girl he loves; and in short, he wishes to do something exterior to give vent to the interior state of his feelings. So when men have been convinced of the existence of God, they have always done and said things to reveal the fact. They feel how small they are compared to him—they fall flat on the ground, or kneel. They feel he is good and great and takes care of them—they sing hymns or gesticulate or even dance. Above all, when they feel that everything, and themselves in particular, belongs to him, they have invariably tended to show this outwardly—usually by “giving” him something, to prove that they recognise his right to everything. Men interested in fields, will offer him field-produce: in orchards, fruit: in flocks, a sheep or goat or ox. This has gone so far that they feel they ought to offer him something which represents *themselves* even more adequately, and you find instances of men killing their eldest son, or mutilating themselves so that the “life-blood” flows. Why “killing”? It seems fairly clear that men, by destroying the “gift” they offer to God, are trying to prove to themselves, and even to show to God, that they truly recognise that he deserves the whole of the gift, and that nothing is kept in reserve:

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and, that they must never take it back, because they have in reality no "right" in it at all. They will also feel the need of expressing outwardly what they think in their minds and picture with their imaginations, and so they make images, and surround these images with signs symbolical of the homage they want to pay to the invisible God. They will do all the things that occur to them; and everything that their senses or imagination can suggest, does occur to them. They will burn sweet spices: they will light bright fires; they will sing and dance, and they will collect coloured flowers or stones or anything else that strikes them. And above all, since man is "social" and lives together in groups, of which he feels the unity very acutely, men will tend to do all these things in common, and make social acts of them.

This is what I mean by worship—any and every piece of human homage paid to God: and while it is quite true that the supreme and only necessary homage is that of the mind, whereby we know God, and the will, whereby we love him and choose to subordinate ourselves to him, yet man rightly tends to express himself exteriorly, and "cult" or "worship" has always, in accord with complete human nature, contained an exterior, material element.

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It is well to see that neither in the Old nor the New Testament has exterior cult been disapproved of, any more than the use of our brains concerning God and the things of God has been rebuked. It is perfectly clear from what I have said that just as a man can make all sorts of mistakes when he starts thinking about God, so he can make mistakes about the ways in which God likes to be worshipped. For example, the human sacrifices and mutilations I mentioned above, are not really an apt way of expressing the completeness of our response to God's all-inclusive claim. So what you will find in the Old and New Testaments is a progressive check upon inadequate *ways* of showing your worship of God, but you will not find that the exterior worship is in itself condemned. The Hebrews inherited from their pagan ancestors a number of forms of worship, and picked up a number more during their sojourns among pagans. When Moses gave them their Law, he abolished many of these, and regulated others, and above all taught a true knowledge of God's nature and attributes so as to prevent a wrong meaning being given to the acts of worship they still used. The one thing that was absolutely forbidden was, the making of images of God for the *eye*. It was too easy for men to attach a

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wrong value—a “person-value,” so to say, to such images. But the Hebrews still went on talking about God in terms that suit the imagination, for they were not abstract philosophers: and as late as you like in Hebrew history, ritual is very minute and exact, and even increasingly so in some ways. As to the New Testament, I say no more than this, so as not to anticipate: Our Lord shows perfectly well that he recognises the duty of expressing exteriorly our interior worship, if only because in the Our Father he provided his disciples with a form of words; and what he rebuked was, not exterior actions, but the idea that exterior actions were good enough without interior dispositions, or, hypocrisy in the carrying out of such actions, for example, in order to win esteem, and not to worship God. And he himself, in the Garden of Gethsemani, allowed his body to reveal the agony of his mind, by falling prostrate, and lifted his eyes to heaven when giving thanks, and raised his hands when he blessed the apostles, and by the use of clay cured the blind man, and by the use of formulas—like the very term “Father” as applied to God—sanctioned our drawing help from customary things of sense, and pictured heaven as a feast.

This leads me to my second point: the

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first has been, that man by his very nature tends to worship as well as think about God by means of his knowledge and experience of created things, and that God has not prohibited him from doing so.

CHAPTER II

GOD'S DESCENT TO MAN

I WANT now to go much further than this, and say that God not only as it were puts up, reluctantly, not to say disdainfully, with this sort of worship from the men whom he has made, but spontaneously deals with them in accordance with their whole nature, in which the material element plays so great a part.

i

After all, God is himself the Author of nature. He could quite well, had he chosen, have created nothing but angels. (Even had he done so, the angels would have had to worship him, as in fact they do, in accordance with *their* nature.) However, he not only created this visible universe, but created Man in particular, and continually thrusts nature into his eyes and on to his attention so that to worship God by means of nature and in nature is the very suggestion, so to say, of God himself. St Paul (Rom. i) insists that he had no excuse for not knowing and wor-

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shipping God, since "what is invisible in God is (none the less) ever since the foundation of the world made visible to human reflection through his works, even his eternal power and divinity": and to the Lystrians (Acts xiv) he preaches a charming little sermon to those simple-minded pagans about how God has never left himself without sufficient witness, by means of his ceaseless gifts of rain and sun, of harvests and happiness. As I said, the nature of pagan notions about God, and worship of God, could easily degenerate; but the root of the matter is there, and was supplied by God himself.

ii

Catholics hold, no less than the Protestant tradition does, that God revealed himself freely and specially to the Hebrews. From the first, we read how God revealed himself and worked through what struck the senses—objects, like the Burning Bush, the Pillar of Fire, the Glory over the Ark—in a sense, through the symbol of the Ark itself: phenomena, like the storm upon Mount Sinai: events, like the Plagues of Egypt. The rules for sacrifice and ritual were not just tolerated by God, but sanctioned positively by him: and altogether, the Old Testament dispensation was so made up of material things in-

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tended to be used spiritually in a greater or a less degree, that the Prophets had to spend much more time in recalling the Jews to interior dispositions of soul, than in exhorting them to be true to the details of the Law. I add, that God chose to reveal himself by means of writings—the Old Testament religion is a “book-religion”—and again, through men: prophets, priests and kings. And all this was essentially social: the People was held together not only by its worship of One and the selfsame God, but by tribal and national and family ceremonies, from what concerned marriage right up to the great festivals like the Pasch, the Day of Atonement, and Pentecost.

iii

Concerning the manifold reasons for, and nature of, the Incarnation, this series already contains a book. Let me then say here only one thing: It establishes once and for ever, and in fullest measure, the principle that God will not save human nature apart from human nature. The material side of the transaction of our Saving might have been minimised. God might have saved us by a prayer, a hope, by just one act of love. He might have remained invisible to eye, inaudible to ear. But he did not. He took our

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human nature—the whole of it. Nothing that is in us, was *not* in him. Jesus Christ was true God, and true Man. In him was that twofold nature, in one Person. And indeed, in his human nature was that double principle that is in ours—there was body, and there was soul. In Jesus Christ are for ever joined the visible and the invisible; the Infinite, and the created, limited thing that man is: Man, in short, and God. Since, then, the Incarnation, no one can possibly criticise a religion because it is not wholly “spiritual.” We are not wholly spiritual: Christ is not wholly spiritual. The religion that we need, the religion that he gives, will not be totally unlike what we are, and what he is. Christ did not treat us as though we were stones: nor yet, as if we were angels. He became Man, because we are men; and *as* men he, perfect Man, will treat us.

iv

You expect that a man’s work will be characteristic of him. When therefore you observe that the whole method of our salvation was an incarnational one, wherein the Spirit operates in and by means of the flesh, you will expect to see this work itself out in detail. You see that it does so, first, in the massive fact of the sort of Church that Christ

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founded. The Church, existing as it does upon this earth for the sake of men who live on the earth, and not for disembodied souls, still less for angels, is so constructed as to suit the situation. It is visible, yet invisible. It has its way in, and its way out. It has quite definite frontiers. It has a perfectly unmistakable form of Government. Of the structure of the Church, this series has also spoken. I need therefore not dwell on it, any more than I need upon the Incarnation itself. I need but add, that the nature of its Founder being what it is, and the nature of the Church being what it is, and our nature being such as we have described it, you cannot possibly be surprised if what goes on within the Church is in keeping with all the rest. The object of the Church being the salvation and sanctification of ourselves, the method of the Church will include and not disdain a material element. Even beforehand, we might have expected this, nay, felt sure that it would be so. In the concrete, this method will turn out to be, normally, the Sacramental System. This is what we have to study.

Let me but add, that we should be glad that this is so. Had our Lord given us a wholly "spiritual" religion (if such a thing is conceivable), we might have reproached him for neglecting those bodies of ours, which

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minister to us so much good pleasure, and provide for us such grave difficulties. We might have grieved that he had done nothing for our social instinct, that always, in every department, forces us to create some social unit or other. Again, knowing ourselves all too well, we might have felt that the ideal, just because so disembodied, would prove to be beyond us: we would be sure that the weight of our bodily humanity would sooner or later drag us down. After all, we must eat and drink: men marry: they mingle with their fellows—if we can in no way co-ordinate all this with what is spiritual, catch it up, use it, see how it is legitimate and can be made of value—we are practically being asked to despair of human life. On the other hand, if we see that no part of human nature is neglected by our Lord, we are, as I said, not only grateful but most humbly grateful, seeing that what has so often supplied material for sin, is judged, by Christ, as none the less able to be given a lofty task, the sublimest duty—that of co-operating with Grace, nay, being used by Grace and in its interests. And once and for all, we see that God scorns nothing that he has made: that Jesus Christ was Man, not despising nor hating his manhood: that his Church understands, as he does, all that is “in man”; and that as the Eternal

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Son of God assumed a human nature, never to lay it down, so too in our very bodies, and helped by bodily things, we are to enter into that supernatural union with God through Christ, wherein is to consist our everlasting joy.

CHAPTER III

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WHEN we read the earliest documents relating to the Christian Church, we find Christians at once using all sorts of religious *behaviour*. They do not only pray, or propound a moral code—you find them being dipped in water: meeting for common meals of greater or less solemnity: “laying hands” on one another: maintaining the institution of marriage: anointing sick persons with oil: not eating certain sorts of foods: paying attention to certain days, such as that of the New Moon, and also the first day of the week, and sometimes adopting quite strange rites, like putting honey upon the lips of children or even adults.

i

These rites did not all stand upon the same footing. Some were prohibited: some were tolerated or kept within certain bounds (like the observance of special days): some were regarded as quite exceptionally solemn, and

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were imposed officially. Looking at the matter from outside, you see, on the whole, that what these last-named had of special about them was, that Christ himself had instituted them, or at least his Apostles officially imposed or used them: and, that they implied something beyond themselves, and even produced certain results in the soul. No one, for example, professed to suppose that Christ had ordered the observance of the New Moon: though placing honey on the lips of a child, or milk, might signify something spiritual, no one quite claimed that it produced any special result in the child's soul. On the other hand, you will hear expressions such as that we are "saved by means of the Bath of New Birth" (Titus iii 5): that the Holy Spirit, or Grace, is given "by means of the laying-on of hands" (2 Tim. i 6: Acts viii 18). And marriage is spoken of as a "mighty symbol" (Eph. v. 25).¹

It is easily seen that there was much here that might induce confusion, and even abuses, and needed clearing up. Indeed, the confusion is often manifest. Some people urged that it was better not to marry at all: others acted as though Christianity had abolished all restrictions upon whom you married. Some

¹The word "*mysterion*," here translated as "symbol," is explained below.

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began to make life intolerable by introducing all sorts of food-restrictions; others went freely to pagan feasts. Some seemed to think that the "bath of New Birth" was meant to give you even bodily immortality: others that you could bathe in it vicariously, on behalf of those who had already died. Some turned the meals, taken in common, into an occasion for creating social cliques, and quite failed to see in the meal that which it stood for or signified—to put it at the lowest, for Paul makes clear that as the ceremony to which it was but a preface proceeded, there was more in it than just a noble or pure idea: the "Lord's Body" itself was to be discerned therein, to be fed upon as he had ordained, with vast consequences to those who thus received it. Hence even the preface to this, with its signification of union in charity, was being travestied by these social schismatics.

We must not be surprised that these Christian rites were not, at first, exhaustively explained, nor perfectly understood by all. Very little, in Christian doctrine, was or could be immediately stated in an adequate formula: even in the simpler matter of issuing orders, it was at once found that questions were asked, and interpretations had to be given. Thus, the Apostles decreed that meat that had been used in a pagan sacrifice must not

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be eaten. "What," asked the Christians, "are we to do when marketing? what, when invited to dinner? How can we tell whether the meat in the butchers' shops, or offered at table, has come from a pagan temple or not?" Such questions needed answering whenever they arose. So with dogma. The Christians knew that they worshipped Christ as God. "How then," some of them asked, "could he have been also man? He could not. His humanity must have been merely apparent—he was a ghost-man." "No," said the Church, "he was true man." Already St John has to make this point. Thereupon the pendulum swung back. "Then he cannot have been true God—his sonship can only have been one of adoption, not of nature. He must have been 'divine,' not God." "No," insisted the Church, "he was true God too." Questions and answers continued till the theology of the Incarnation, as we say, was worked out—the complete *theory* and the proper official expressions in which the dogma was to be stated, were provided. The same sort of process is seen in regard of these pieces of ritual behaviour that the Christians carried through. It will be clear that I am not remotely suggesting that what we now know as the Seven Sacraments did not exist from the beginning, and exist in substance just as

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they do now: but, if I may say so reverently, the first Christians needed desperately to *use* our Lord Jesus Christ himself, rather than speculate about him—though the time came and came soon when they had to do that, and did it: and somewhat in the same way they were baptised, married, confirmed, went to Communion, but had no “covering formula,” so to call it, to apply to all these transactions precisely from what we call the “sacramental” point of view.

ii

You first see coming to light the notion that certain transactions are “signs”—they visibly represent something you do not see—an idea, or an event. Washing with water is a very natural symbol of spiritual purification; sharing in a common meal naturally symbolises social unity, and indeed, the breaking of bread could well represent the sacrifice of Christ himself: oil had always stood for a symbol of health and well-being. Hence the word “mystery” began very soon to be used by Christians of their rites, and the Latin word “sacramentum” after a while began to be used as a translation of “mystery.” But be careful about these words. “*Mysterion*” originally only meant something

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"shut up," and then, something which had a meaning concealed within it, and then, just a "secret." The pagan rites known as "Mysteries" consisted in ceremonies of a symbolical sort, wherein religious impressions were made on the minds of the participants—for example, the solemn exhibition of an ear of corn represented the presence of a god: an elaborate dance or procession represented the progress of a soul in the underworld, and so forth. What the devotee had learnt or experienced was to be kept a dead secret. "Mystery," then, in this original sense has nothing to do with the word technically used now to mean a Truth in itself surpassing human intelligence, and needing to be revealed by God, and even so, not fully intelligible to our natural powers of thinking. Similarly "sacrament" meant at first no more than a "holy thing," or rather, a "religionified" thing, so to say. It was first applied to money deposited by litigants in some religious place, or, forfeited by the loser and given to religious purposes. It came thus to mean any solemn engagement, and in particular the military oath. As equivalent (very roughly: the Latins were not skilful in finding equivalents for Greek words) to "mystery," it meant little more than that what

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it was applied to was more sacred than its mere external nature would lead you to suppose.

But you see at once that this notion of "sign" extends so widely as to cover almost anything; similarly, almost any religious performance could be called a "holy thing," and indeed the word "sacrament" for a long time was applied to all sorts of religious activities—the Lord's Prayer was a sacrament in this sense. We ourselves apply the word "mystery" not only in the technical sense, but, for example, to the incidents commemorated in the Rosary, because they were material occurrences with profound significations. The notion then admits of much further definition.

It is at once clear that some "significant" transactions stood out as quite special because they had been instituted by Christ himself. He said: "Go, baptise in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." He said: "Do this is commemoration of me." Yet even this would not be sufficient as a definition of certain special transactions; for Christ told his apostles to "Wash one another's feet," for example. Here is an obvious symbol, and it was instituted by himself, and the institution is duly observed from time to time in the Church even now.

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Yet it stood on quite a different footing, for instance, from baptism. But why did it do so?

Because it became clear that some of these signs were instituted by Christ to produce certain results in those who used them, and, by no means ordinary results of a moral or devotional sort, such as the looking at a pious picture might do, or even what I have just quoted—the Washing of Feet. Our Lord says definitely that Baptism is necessary for salvation (Mark xvi 16); that to enter the Kingdom of Heaven you *must* be born again by water as well as by the Holy Spirit (John iii 5); and St Paul (quoted above) says we are “*saved* by means of the bath of New Birth.” When, after baptism, hands are laid on the newly baptised, or when they are laid on those set apart for the Christian ministry, the Holy Ghost, and Grace, are said to be given “by means” of this laying-on of hands.

We see then that there exist in the Church certain material transactions, such that they stand as signs of something spiritual, and also, somehow cause and confer and contain what they signify, and that these efficacious signs were in some sense instituted by Christ himself. There is one more preliminary remark to be made.

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iii

I have called this booklet *The Sacramental "System."* This implies that Christ has not as it were instituted "sacraments" casually, but according to a principle; and, that the sacraments are not thrown haphazard into the Church, but form an orderly series: not only that their existence is governed by an *idea*, but that an idea rules, no less, their number and their nature, gives them coherence and a unity. The idea that governs their existence has already been sufficiently, perhaps, explained. I therefore merely recall that it involves the doctrine that matter is not bad, nor to be despised, but can be, and is, made use of by God and by Christ and by the Church in the work of our sanctification. The opposite to this would be the doctrine that matter, or the body, or the visible world at large *are* somehow bad, and this doctrine was best seen in the sect of the Manicheans—a curious sect, Persian in origin, but made up as time went on of all sorts of ideas and practices. As a matter of fact, the notion has always existed in some shape side by side with the true Catholic one, which is, that nothing that God has made is bad, nor has it become bad since and because of the Fall. Right down to our own day, a

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false Puritanism has existed: the Middle Ages saw many strange versions of it, involving strange results, such as, that food, marriage, and in fact anything to do with the physical life of man, was bad, owing to his fallen state, or even to the essential badness of matter. It is no part of my duty to go into this here; but you will see at once that the Sacramental System opposes this definitely. No part of God's creation is bad: every part of it can be used by God for the most spiritual purposes. The results, on the other hand, of the false doctrine have been very bad indeed. Men, by dint of thinking that matter and the body were bad, have developed a sort of insane hatred of them, and have gone so far in their desire to be rid of them as even to commit suicide. Or again, since they saw that they had not the strength thus to inflict pain and denial upon themselves consistently, they took refuge in the notion that their body was not really part of themselves at all, but that the real "self" resided somehow inside the body, like a jewel in an ugly and filthy case or shell; and so they said that it could not really matter what their body did, because it was not really "they." They could then allow the body to indulge in every kind of debauchery, while still maintaining that their soul, or "self," was living a lofty and

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holy life. The sacramental doctrine of the Church prevents both these disastrous notions taking root amongst us. Even were the body no more than the shell of the soul, it has to be treated with extreme respect, and kept holy and pure, because it contains so precious a thing. But it is more than the soul's shell: along with the soul it constitutes "man": and so, body must be saved no less than soul, and by means of bodily or material things the living man is approached and may be helped as well as by spiritual things. We thank God that this is so: were it not, we might despair.

When I said that the sacramental "system" also implies that the actual Sacraments can be arranged in an "order" of an intelligible sort, I meant that they could be thought of by us, in proportion as we understand them better, in that sort of way. Thus—There is obviously such a thing as *natural life*—the life by which we all of us live by dint of being born and not having yet died. In the book on Grace you have seen that God has freely willed to make to man a "free gift" (which is what the word Grace really means), namely, a supernatural life which is in no way due to him nor can be earned by him, but which involves a far greater happiness

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and well-being for him if he lives by it. Now just as a man requires to be born, in order to live at all, so must he have a "new birth," if he is to begin to live by this "new life." This New Birth is given by the first Sacrament, Baptism. After a while, boys and girls begin to "grow up": they take stock of their position and responsibilities: also, their bodies and their minds change in many ways, and their human nature may be described as being "completed." They also require not a little strengthening; body and mind, during this period. In many ways the Sacrament of Confirmation may be regarded as fulfilling a like "completing" function in the supernatural life: it does not give that life, but it completes and establishes it, and St Thomas compares it to adolescence. As life proceeds, it is normal for men and women to go even further in the completing of their human life, by joining another life to their own in marriage. The Church does not substitute anything for human marriage, but it so infuses grace into and through the Christian marriage contract as to raise it to the dignity of a Sacrament, and a supernatural element enters into this great human crisis-in-life. Within the Christian Church, however, men may be called to consecrate their lives to the

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immediate service of God as priests. This choice and vocation are of such overwhelming importance, and so unlike anything else, that we are not surprised to see that Ordination, in the Catholic Church, is a Sacrament too, nor merely a setting aside of a man for a special duty. But for the proper maintenance of any part of life, appropriate food has to be given: for the maintenance and development of the supernatural life it will be seen that there is in the Church a unique and a uniquely appropriate food, the Eucharist. Again, a man may fall sick: he thereupon requires doctoring: there is in the Church a Sacrament instituted precisely for the purpose of healing even the gravest sicknesses of the soul, which are all due to sin. But after all, no human life lasts for ever upon this earth: men die. When death is imminent, or probable, in how great a need does the spirit stand ! for the body and its brain can now no more assist it. At such an hour the supernatural life, too, runs its grave risks; and the "Last Sacraments" are there to succour it.

Thus it will be seen that the Sacraments can all be thought of under the heading, or general idea, of "Life" and its needs. In this way their unity of purpose and order in action

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can be clearly seen, and more easily appreciated and remembered.

I have now to enter with somewhat more detail into the Catholic teaching concerning the various elements that make up a "Sacrament."

CHAPTER IV

THE THEOLOGY OF THE SACRAMENTS

IT used to be said that the Sacraments, as Catholics understand them, were medieval inventions. Research showed that St Augustine, who died in 430, taught a fully "sacramental" theology. He was therefore said to be the guilty innovator. Finally it is clear that well before his time, in fact from the beginning, the Church contained the *fact* and, better than that, the *use* of those things which we now call Sacraments.

i

That the Sacraments always included and could not but include the element of "sign," "symbol," is evident. The water used in baptism symbolised at once the washing away of spiritual stains: also, as St Paul saw, it symbolised (especially when the candidate for baptism was often, though not always, *immersed* in the baptismal water) the complete passing away of the "old man," the merely natural man, and the emergence of the New

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Man, the supernatural self. The "bath" is a "bath of second and new birth." The Eucharistic meal symbolised forthwith a unity among Christians, in charity, which any common meal, taken among men, naturally symbolises even in our Western world, and still more in the Eastern one. The Bread, one loaf of many grains, symbolised that mystical Body of Christ which the Church is. And the Breaking of the Bread, the Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross; and again, the participation of all in that one Bread, the fellowship of Christians in Christ himself. The wine, again, so manifestly symbolised Christ's Blood outpoured in sacrifice, that the heresy of the Aquarians, who wished to use water instead of wine, stood condemned, if for no other reason, because the "sign" provided by the wine thus disappeared. The "imposition of hands," used in confirmation and in ordination, was even more obviously a sign of the giving of the Holy Ghost when the metaphor of "God's Right Hand," meaning that same Holy Ghost, was more in use than it is now. The hand, issuing from clouds, so common in ancient days, was at once recognised as meaning the Holy Spirit; when the priest today, at the Blessing of the Font, plunges his hand into the water, this symbolises the same thing—the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Oil, used

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in Confirmation, Ordination, and in the Sacrament of the Sick, also carried an obvious symbolical value both to Jewish and ex-pagan converts. For among the Jews, the olive had always gone along with the vine and the fig-tree as symbol of prosperity, and oil had been poured on those who were consecrated to kingship and so forth, in sign of the gift of the richness of God's blessing. Among the Greeks, its use by athletes at once connected it with the idea of suppleness and strength. Marriage, even natural marriage among pagans, had always been fenced about with ceremonies expressive of union, even when that union was far rather one of possession by the man, than of true union between two. But the very event of a marriage, necessarily expressing itself outwardly, enabled St Paul to present it as the sign and symbol of a far higher union, that between Christ and his Church, and indeed the metaphor of Espousal as applied to the union between God and the chosen people, or God and the individual soul, was quite ancient and familiar. Finally, the whole concrete behaviour of penitent and priest, could not but express, exteriorly, the spiritual events of forgiveness and restoration to grace.

Naturally enough, those Sacraments which were not only most necessary, but whose in-

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stitution was most vividly described in Scripture, and whose material element was most obvious, such as water, bread and wine, were most dwelt upon by early writers; and, again naturally enough, the idea of their symbolic character was chiefly worked out in a place like Alexandria, where people tended to see signs in almost everything, and attached symbolical values to the most concrete historical events. The Latin world was far less inclined to look below the surface of things, yet here too from the beginning the "sign" value of Sacramental transactions is perfectly clear.

St Augustine, who was very fond of working out the notion of God's "traces" in nature—even in connection with such doctrines as the Holy Trinity—naturally elaborates the meaning of "signs" in general. He says that a "sign" is a thing which because of its outward form which it thrusts upon the senses, makes something else, by its own nature, come into the mind. A Sacrament, then, he says, is a "sacred sign of a spiritual object." It is a natural object that evokes the idea of, because picturing, a spiritual object. Of course he says much more than this; but we are keeping close to the "sign-element" in Sacraments.

As the Middle Ages began to dawn, it was seen that men were insisting rather upon the

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"mystery-element" in Sacraments, *i.e.*, of the hiddenness of what was in them, rather than on the manifesting of the spiritual and invisible by the material and visible. But the balance soon swung back, or rather, reached a good equilibrium—in Sacraments was seen *both* the outward sign, *and* the inward thing that was symbolised. The thing by its nature was "secret," because invisible; but it was meant to become visible by means of what signified its presence.

[I might perhaps just mention here that you may often read the phrase "the *matter* and the *form*" of the Sacraments. This is a philosophical notion that need not really delay us. In practice it means that the exterior element in the Sacraments can be seen as consisting of two parts, one more general, like the water in baptism—for water can stand for all sorts of things, as oil can, or bread—and the other more specific and more accurately expressing what the general symbol really stands for in the circumstances; this second part consists of words or their equivalent actions: thus "I baptise thee" shows for what, precisely, the water is being used, and what, in consequence, it symbolises: something more is required than the mere fact of meeting and living together, to show that a man and woman really mean to

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be husband and wife. And so for the rest.

These philosophical terms, derived from Aristotle, have been found useful, so as to make clear what are the essential elements of the sacramental sign, *i.e.*, what is necessary for the validity of the *sacrament*.]

So far, then, it is at least clear how foolish are they who talk about Catholic Sacraments as "meaningless bits of ritual" and so forth. They include ritual; but since they are essentially and from the nature of the case *signs*, they cannot possibly be "meaningless."

ii

We have, however, insisted that the Sacraments are a very special sort of "sign." They are *not* mere pictures. The essence of the matter is seen in phrases like: "you are saved *by means* of the bath of New Birth." "The grace which is in thee *by means of* the imposition of my hands." If I decide to become a Christian, and then go through a ceremony to show that I have acted on my decision, that ceremony is a sign of my decision, but need not be anything else. If I went to Holy Communion, and it made me remember the Passion, and this memory touched my heart, my act of Communion might well count as a "commemoration" of the Passion, which occasioned my having religious sentiments,

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but it still would not be more than an exterior commemoration, even symbolical, of a past event, such as my touching my hat when I pass the Cenotaph, which may well fill me with affectionate or patriotic emotions and resolves. Nay, even though *on the occasion* of my doing this or that, God gives me grace, the thing that I do remains merely the occasion of that gift. Thus I might do a kind act to a sick man, and on occasion of this God might bless and help me. But the doing of that act would not be a Sacrament. You see then the difference between a sign which is a mere representation of something else; and a sign of something invisible which is the mere occasion of my obtaining that invisible thing; and a sign which is that *by means of which* I obtain the invisible thing it symbolises. It is in this last sense that the Sacraments are Signs.

Since the perfectly definite "by means of" so clearly to be read in the Scriptures, and the almost violent description of the effects produced by good or bad Communions, given by St Paul (1 Cor. xi), there could be no doubt as to the *work done by* the Sacramental Signs, which become, as Origen says (about 250 A. D.), symbols which are the "origin and fount" of the invisible thing they symbolise. The notion became clear pre-

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cisely by way of that double nature of man on which we have already insisted. The Sacrament was one thing, and yet it reached and affected both elements in man, the invisible spiritual soul no less than the body. When these very early writers asked themselves *how* this might be, they contented themselves on the whole by answering: "By means of the Spirit of Power of God, working in" the water, and so forth. The fact that a Sacrament is an efficacious symbol, as we now say, was then clearly realised well before Augustine. Cyprian, indeed, insists that the Eucharist at once symbolises, and *is*, the Sacrifice of Christ; it is a representation which contains the reality. In Augustine, the notion of efficacy is so strong, that he keeps saying that in the Sacrament it is Christ who acts; Christ who washes; Christ who cleanses. But it could still be argued that Augustine does not make clear the difference between a divine action *on the occasion* of a sacramental rite carried through and a divine action so bound to the rite that it is done through and by means of it. But you can see from an examination of his whole mind that if you had asked him directly this question: Am I given grace by means of the Sacrament? he would have answered: Yes. But as language became ever more exact, keeping pace with

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thought ever more accurate, the nature of the bond between the divine action and the sacramental sign become perfectly clear. Hugh of St Victor (c. 1140) says: A sacrament is a corporal or material element, set forth exteriorly to the senses, which by its similarity portrays, and by its institution means, and by blessing contains some invisible and spiritual grace. While Peter Lombard (c. 1150) says even more clearly: A Sacrament is properly so called because it is the sign of the grace of God, and the expression of invisible grace, in such a way as to be not only its image, but its cause.

iii

What perhaps helped more swiftly than anything else to make this nature of a Sacrament—"efficacious sign"—quite clear, was a series of three questions: What exactly is it that is done to us by our using a Sacrament? Who can administer a Sacrament? if not just anyone, how far does the effect of the Sacrament depend on the person of its minister? and how far do my personal dispositions enter into the affair? does the good result obtained from using a Sacrament depend upon *me*? Many details of the answers to be given to these questions belong to other books of this series which deal with the Sacra-

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ments severally. Here I need do little more than get at the various principles involved, illustrating them by allusion to the several Sacraments rather than examining each Sacrament separately.

(a) The answer to the first question—What does the (due) use of a Sacrament bring about in me? was easily and immediately answered—Sanctification. Baptism was from the very words of Christ seen to be absolutely necessary if the soul was to be saved at all. But salvation comes through grace and only through grace. Therefore sanctifying Grace is what is given through the use of the Sacraments. I need but add one point here. This grace is, quite simply, a divine life infused into the soul—a supernatural union with God. Grace then is always and everywhere one and the same thing. But Grace may be given to a soul in which grace is not—as to the unbaptised, or again to those who by mortal sin have lost grace; or, more grace may be given to those who already possess grace. There may be the first infusion of Grace, or the restoration of Grace, or the ever renewed intensification of Grace. Already, then, you can see that though the gift be, in all the Sacraments, one and the same thing, yet it may be given in various circumstances, and in fact is variously given

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according to the circumstances of those using the various Sacraments—for example, Baptism, Penance, or Confirmation. However, this is not the only difference between Sacraments. Marriage and Ordination, for example, are not just means of providing more grace to people who happen to be going to get married or be ordained. They are meant to provide them with grace *because* they are going to be married or ordained; that is, grace so acting as to help them in their circumstances—to sanctify them precisely *as* married people or as priests. That is, grace is given not just in general, but in view of the state upon which its recipients are entering or in which they live and need special assistance. Baptism gives the first grace of all which unites a man to God through Christ: confirmation establishes him in this: penance restores a man to that supernatural life if he have lost it: the special needs of the married or of the clergy are obvious; so, too, are those of the sick: all our life through we have need of more and more grace, especially in difficult moments, and we gain it supremely through Holy Communion. This special grace is called “sacramental grace,” to distinguish it from “sanctifying” grace at large.

The fact that the whole existence of the

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Sacraments, and of each Sacrament, is concerned with the giving of Grace, involves a point so important that it may be touched on here. It is, that the Sacraments were instituted by Christ. Historically, this fact became emphasised for the very reason that we have been giving. It was because the Sacraments give grace, that men saw, and insisted on, the fact that they were instituted by Christ; it was not because they were instituted by Christ, that men concluded they gave grace. Both ways of looking at the thing can be true; but the former was the way in which men first and chiefly looked at it. The Sacraments give grace. But Grace is only given by God through the merits of Jesus Christ. Therefore if the gift of Grace is so annexed to the Sacraments as to make their reception (anyhow in the case of baptism) a *sine qua non* of salvation, they must have been of divine institution: but since everything in the Church, that is essential and substantial, was created by Christ himself upon earth, therefore the Sacraments were instituted not just by God, but by the God-Man, Christ.

Not that such a statement settles a variety of subsidiary questions, any more than the definition of the Council of Trent does, which simply states that the Sacraments were "all

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of them instituted by Jesus Christ;" and even the Modernist errors condemned by Pius X can be grouped under the general notion that it was not Christ who instituted the Sacraments in *any* real sense, but that they grew up under pressure of circumstances, either in the time of the Apostles or even after it, and began by being mere rites of various sorts, quite different in nature from anything we have been talking about.

This clumsy notion is as alien to facts as would be the idea that for a Sacrament to have been instituted by Christ, it was necessary for Christ personally and in so many words to institute it just as it is at present carried out in the liturgy of the Church. The earlier writers of the Church did not go into details on the subject: no one ever disputed that Baptism and the Eucharist were instituted by Christ in person and in a form from which the Church must never recede. But it was usually through something else that the point was reached and the fact asserted—I mean, for example, it was the habit of the Gnostics to appeal to a kind of inner light, as settling truth and right, which drove an Irenæus to insist that the proper guardian of truth was the episcopate, whose origin was Christ himself by way of the Apostles, though Ignatius had already been clear enough on the

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subject.¹ But when it began to be thought that the administration of the Sacraments or at least their "matter and form" must always remain, and have remained, unchanged in every way, then writers were either forced to assert that Christ had so instituted them in person, or, since that would be very difficult and in fact impossible to show, that he need not have instituted them in person at all, but that, for example, the Holy Ghost, not Christ, instituted Confirmation, and a Church council in the ninth century instituted Penance (so Alexander of Hales, *c.* 1245). In this department, Dominican and Franciscan schools of thought seem to have clashed not a little, the Franciscan ones going too far away from the doctrine of institution by Christ himself—St Bonaventure, for example, allowing that Confirmation and Unction might have been instituted either by the Apostles or immediately after their death, though by divine authority. There was, however, current the idea that Christ might have instituted the Sacraments quite generally, and no more—that is, have appointed the divine effect, leaving the method of its obtaining to the arrangement of his Church.

The real point is reached when one sees that a man can be described as "instituting"

¹ Irenaeus fl. about 140-200; Ignatius, † 107.

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a thing whether he does so in detail, or whether he initiates a thing only "in the rough," and leaves the working out of it to others.

Take the case of Confirmation. You could, conceivably, imagine Christ saying: "When a man has been baptised, lay your hands on him and anoint him with oil, saying certain words: this sign will produce grace in him, such as to 'confirm' him and 'complete' his baptism." Or, "When a man has been baptised, he will require to be 'confirmed': do this by some suitable sign." Though the Council of Trent has defined that all the Sacraments were instituted by Christ, which settles for us that they were not merely invented by the Apostles, nor merely grew up under pressure of circumstances, yet that Council does not state in what way exactly they were instituted by Christ. It does not, to start with, follow that they were *all* instituted in the *same* way. But it would never be admitted by a Catholic theologian, and should not be asserted by any historian, that Christ merely gave the Apostles some vague hint that there were to be transactions of a sacramental sort in his Church, and then left them to do what they thought best in the matter. Apart from all other considerations, a historian would, I

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think, see that the older Apostles were so very conservative—and among them all, perhaps, St James the most conservative—that they would never have started anything at all unless they were quite sure that Christ meant them to do exactly that. Hence since no one ought to dispute that Baptism and the Eucharist were instituted immediately and explicitly by Christ Himself; and since the Apostles immediately began to confirm and to ordain; and since it was precisely St James who promulgated what was to be done in the way of anointing the sick; and since it was St Paul (who positively piqued himself on not being an innovator) who declares the sacramental value of Christian marriage; and given Christ's assertion that those sins which the Apostles remitted, were remitted and those that they retained, were retained—with the necessary consequence that they would be called upon at times to remit and to retain sins—we are right to be morally certain, historically, that the Apostles had Christ's direct order to do, in substance, all those things which we now know as the administration of the Sacraments.

Historically, then, we can show that all the Sacraments can be connected up with something that Christ said; and a foundation for the assertion that he instituted them can

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be found in his own words: the general behaviour and temperament of the Apostles bears out that herein they acted on some sort of mandate received from Christ in person: precisely in what way he gave it, save in the case of Baptism and the Eucharist, we cannot ever know. What further is certain, is, that the Church cannot substantially alter anything that he instituted, though in what precisely the substance of the material element of the Sacrament, by his order, consists, again can be matter for discussion. What the Church has the perfect right to do is to ordain that a Sacrament has now to be administered in such and such a way, under pain of its being illicitly or even invalidly administered. Thus the Church can add conditions to the administering of the Sacraments, but she cannot subtract anything in them that is of Christ's ordaining and has been substantial in them from the beginning.

Our purpose is rather the explanation of Catholic doctrine than the refutation of false doctrines. It is however so often said, nowadays, that St Paul practically invented the Sacraments by introducing into certain current practices quite new ideas, that this theory has to be glanced at. I might notice, in passing, how far things have travelled since the time when the Sacraments were

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called "medieval accretions." So thoroughly "sacramental" is the earliest Church seen to have been, that no one short of St Paul is appealed to as the originator of Sacraments. Paul therefore is said to have borrowed religious terms and notions from the "mystery-cults" of the contemporary pagans. These mystery religions involved the exercise of a great deal of magical ritual (magic is spoken of briefly below) and the recitation of formulas, so that the "initiate," as he was called, became on the one hand much impressed by the uncanny spectacles he had seen, and, on the other, was convinced he now was guaranteed to escape the dangers in the next world which were calculated to befall one who found himself there without some such magical preliminary. In more philosophical forms of these cults, a good deal of allegory was introduced, and a more philosophical initiate might maintain that in some sense he was incorporated with the god in whose honour the mystery was celebrated. Indeed, the god's history might be enacted during the celebration by means of a symbolical dance or other piece of ritual. Briefly: Paul knew of, as did everyone, the existence and general nature of mystery-cults, and once or twice remotely alludes, with contempt, to them. The rule observed by himself, St John,

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and early Christians in general, with regard to pagan forms of worship, was to keep from all contact with them: their abhorrence of them was almost ferocious. Paul does *not* use any of the characteristic words of the mystery-religions; he insists that he introduced nothing into the Christian creed or code that was new—save, if you will, the emphasis laid by him on the truth that non-Jews were to be admitted as freely into the Church as Jews were, and, that none of them had to observe the Jewish ritual. The mysteries moreover were expensive affairs, and reserved for a small minority who were pledged under secrecy to reveal nothing that they experienced; Christianity on the other hand was for all. Christianity was a doctrine; there was no doctrine in the mysteries—they affected not the intelligence, but the imagination and the nerves. The whole method and effect of the mysteries was “magical”—you recited the due formula, performed the proper programme, and the effects occurred automatically. There was nothing moral about the mysteries, the purity you there gained was merely a ritual one—in the concrete the celebration of the mysteries was anything but pure: one writer has called them a mixture of shambles and brothel. If anyone imagines that Paul is

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going deliberately to borrow or even unconsciously to absorb anything from such a source, with which to improve the Faith to which he had turned, we abandon such a critic as foolish, or, as determined to discover at any and every cost some non-Christian source for the Christian Sacraments.

(b) The Sacraments therefore receive their efficacy from Christ. What then is the rôle played by the "minister" of the Sacrament? for after all you cannot baptise nor confirm nor ordain nor anoint nor absolve yourself, nor can a layman at any rate consecrate the Eucharist; and though the man and the woman are the ministers, each to the other, of the sacrament of Marriage, yet each does require the other, and obviously cannot administer that Sacrament to himself by himself.

Again, the rôle of the minister in the administration of Sacraments did not come up on, so to say, its own merits, but, because of the claim of heretics to administer the Sacraments equally with the orthodox. This claim seemed so horrible to certain groups, or to fierce-tempered individuals like the African Cyprian, that, on the grounds that where the Church was not, the Holy Spirit was not, and where he was not, nothing of a sanctifying nature could exist, and therefore not

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the Sacraments, they denied to heretic ministers the power to administer any Sacrament whatsoever validly. This dispute will be found explained, and the course it took, in the pages of this series dealing with Baptism and Orders. But behind that dispute existed the universally admitted certainty, that a proper minister is necessary in the case of each and every Sacrament, and the dispute really turned upon the question—Who *was* the proper one? It was, all admitted, the “word” of the proper minister that made the bread to be Christ’s Body, that made the water to be no mere water, but baptismal water. This conjunction of the word with the thing, so that a moral whole was created, supplied that due material element through which the Spirit of God could act. But the minister was not ever regarded simply as a man. Had he been so regarded, certainly much might have turned upon his moral or mental dispositions. But he was definitely regarded as representing, in his person, the Church; and the Church was the continuation of Christ, and the dwelling place of his Spirit. Therefore, albeit it was a man who spoke the words, Christ spoke through them—“Christ cleanses.”

It is therefore certain that the moral condition of the minister of the Sacrament does

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not interfere with its validity on its own account. The mere fact that his soul has sin in it, does not render him useless as an instrument in the hands of the Church and of Christ, for the "making" of the Sacrament. It is desirable, in every way, that a priest, for example, should be a holy and even a cultured man. But the fact that he is immoral, or boorish, cannot affect the Sacrament as such. Certainly a devout priest will obtain, by his holiness and the fervour of his prayer, additional grace for those on whose behalf he administers a Sacrament; but this is a consideration exterior to the essence of the Sacrament itself. Similarly, two people who intend to get married and go through the marriage ceremony in proper circumstances, may, if they be frivolous, obtain little enough actual grace, but they will be truly married, and have administered to one another the Sacrament. It is very important even here to distinguish between a valid Sacrament and a fruitful one.

Is there then no way in which the minister can interfere with the validity of the rite he accomplishes? Certainly, but only one—that is, by not "intending" to accomplish a Sacramental rite at all, even though he goes through the ritual quite scrupulously. Illustrate this as follows. If an unbaptised per-

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son says to me: I do not intend to become a Christian, but I wish you would show me how people are baptised. And if I were to answer: Very well. I do not intend to baptise you; but were I to do so, this is how I would do it—and proceeded to pour the water, pronouncing the words. I did not mean to baptise the person, and the person did not intend to be baptised; therefore I did not baptise him despite the complete performance of the ritual. After all, this is the merest common sense. In just the same way, if a woman, for example, is forced to go through a marriage ceremony, and does so, but does not intend that her submission to the rite should mean a real marriage, married she is not. Observe what a denial of this would imply. It would mean that a woman could be married off, willy nilly, like a head of cattle. All civilised persons would reject so barbarous a notion.

However, just what sort of intention must the minister have? He must have "the intention of doing what the Church does." The Council of Trent, while defining that intention was necessary, did not settle whether a purely external intention of doing the rite properly sufficed, or whether some deeper kind of intention was needed too. It is at least certain that the minister need

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not personally believe that the Church's doctrine is true: provided he intends to do what the Church does, whatever that may be, he does do it. Of course, if the minister intends, positively, to do something different from what the Church does, he has not the requisite intention: I mention this, because while the ordaining bishops in the days of the Protestant revolution in this country would undoubtedly have said that they meant to do what Christ did when ordaining, and therefore, what his true Church did, yet they meant definitely *not* to create sacrificing-priests in the old sense; therefore they did not create them. Add to this that the men who were then being ordained had not the slightest intention of being made priests in the old sense. So, owing to this double lack of due intention (as well as for other reasons), the old sort of priest was not made. The traditional sort of Order was no more given.

(c) This leads us to the final question, How far do the dispositions of the recipient of the Sacrament affect its work in his soul? The question was most urgently asked when the Reformers began to say that nothing *save* the dispositions of the recipient mattered. There could be two extremes—one, where the action of the Sacrament would be described as purely mechanical; carry the rite through,

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and then, whatever be your interior dispositions, its effect is produced; this would be the extreme of "magic:" the other extreme would involve (as among many of the Reformers it actually did) the assertion that the minister and the form of administration mattered nothing at all; all that mattered was the faith of the recipient: this would be complete subjectivism. Anyhow the question, so far as Catholic doctrine goes, has already been half answered above. If the subject to whom the sacramental rite is administered, does not in any sense intend to receive the Sacrament, he does not receive it. I say, "in any sense," because there can be such a thing as an habitual intention: the recipient may be distracted at the moment and not think about what he is doing; or (in the case, for example, of Penance and the Eucharist) the action may have become so customary that he does what he does without reflecting on the nature of his action at all. However, were you to interrupt, and ask him what he intends to be doing, he would answer that he means to be getting absolved, or to be receiving Communion. He has therefore an habitual intention, and validly, so far as that is concerned, receives the Sacrament in question. In order not to receive it, he has so to retract his original intention as to will not

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to receive it. But that original intention is necessary. It is not sufficient simply to offer no resistance.

The special question of Baptism being given to unconscious children is treated of in the book upon that Sacrament. Enough here to say that the will of the Church, and in a sense of the parents or sponsors, creates a social solidarity such that the child, embedded therein, can be answered for by that will.

But the real problem arises when a man approaches a Sacrament with such dispositions as to present an obstacle to grace. Such obstacle, in the case of the "Sacraments of the Living,"¹ would be mortal sin; in the case of the "Sacraments of the Dead," *unrepented* mortal sin. The question is particularly important for those Sacraments which cannot be repeated—*i.e.*, Baptism, Confirmation, Orders and Matrimony (which cannot be repeated, at any rate, while the matrimonial bond persists). If I approach these sacraments with an obstacle to grace, yet desiring to receive the sacrament, I am indeed validly baptised, confirmed, ordained, or married, but, I cannot actually receive grace (which is the union of the soul with God),

¹The Sacraments of the Living are those which presuppose the state of grace in the recipient—*i.e.*, all the sacraments except Baptism and Penance, which two are called Sacraments of the Dead.

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since I am all the while resolving to be dis-united from him. What then happens? Theologians teach that the grace of the Sacrament is produced in my soul when I remove the obstacle set by my evil will.

Does this then mean that the whole of the effects of the Sacraments are achieved within me if I merely interpose no obstacle of evil will to those effects? Is grace given *wholly* "ex opere operato," as they say—by means of the work *done*? the mere subjecting myself to a certain rite? By no means. There is also the effect which comes "ex opere operantis," which means, through the effort I myself put into the transaction. If I approach a Sacrament without an obstacle to grace indeed, yet dully, Grace will no doubt reach me: but if I approach it with, so to say, an appetite, Grace will be appropriated and assimilated by me far more richly. All our Christian religious life, and our sacramental life most certainly, is in reality co-operative. The special feature about Christ's activity is, that it always comes first—the very impulse to seek or desire a Sacrament or any other good thing comes from God before it exists in our own heart; and, that it creates, and creates what is supernatural, whereas our own best efforts, unaided, cannot create more

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than what is commensurate to them, that is, what is natural. I cannot lift myself up by the hair of my own head.

Three Sacraments, then, produce an effect such that they cannot be repeated. They impress upon the soul what is called a "Character," or seal. The sacramental "Character" is not grace, but is a separate effect produced in the soul by the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Orders. They place my soul for ever in a special relation to Christ, and I cannot be replaced in it. I am for ever a baptised, confirmed, or ordained person. Even apostasy cannot alter this fact. Even though, by my evil will, I prevent the Sacrament from producing grace within me, yet I cannot prevent it from producing this "Character," if I will to receive the Sacrament validly at all. The theory of the Sacramental Character followed on the Church's consistent practice of not re-baptising, re-confirming, re-ordaining anyone who had properly been baptised and the rest. The controversies on this matter concerned, not the principle, but the concrete question whether so and so had been properly baptised, and the rest. I think that further discussion of these points, and of allied speculations, is now unnecessary.

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Certain critics of the Catholic Faith and practice are never tired of denouncing the Sacraments as pieces of "magic." It is seen by now how wrong at every point they are. A magical transaction would be of the following nature. I repeat a formula, or perform an act, like "Open Sesame!" or, sticking pins into a wax figure of my enemy, either without knowing why, or merely because someone whom I consider to know why, tells me to. Automatically, an effect takes place, such as, a door opening, or the sickness and death of my foe. All I have to do, is, to carry my part through with mechanical accuracy. In the use of a Sacrament, first of all, the rite *means* something: it is a sign. Further, I use that rite because *Christ*, the Son of God, appointed it and told me to use it. Further, I do so, not because there are any mechanical consequences attached to it, but because it is the cause in me of Grace, a purely supernatural thing of which God alone is the origin and giver. Again, he who administers to me that rite, does not do so in any private capacity, nor because he has the key to certain spells or pieces of esoteric knowledge, but because he acts as the Church's minister, and she acts in him, and Christ acts in her. Finally, whether or no the Sacrament be fruitful in me, depends

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on my intention and will, wholly or in part. Hence at no point do a magical transaction and a sacramental transaction coincide.

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Before concluding, it may be of service to summarise the teaching of the Council of Trent, our classical source of information, upon the Sacraments in general. That Council denounces those who should say that the Sacraments of the New Law were not, all of them, instituted by Christ, or, that they are more, or fewer, than the seven often enumerated above. That any of these is not a true and proper Sacrament. That these Christian Sacraments differ in no way from Old Testament Sacraments save in their ceremonial. (Observe, that this implies that there were Sacraments under the old Law, but that they were different from ours. The main differences are, that the Old Testament Sacraments were indeed Signs instituted by God, but that they looked forward to and promised the Grace of Christ, yet did not impart it: in so far as they were efficacious signs, they effected not a moral, but a legal and ritual purity.) The Council proceeds to denounce anyone who says that the Seven Sacraments are all of them on an equal footing, so that none is in any way nobler than

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another (clearly Baptism, an absolutely necessary Sacrament, is on a different footing from Marriage or Ordination, since no one is obliged to get married or ordained). That the Sacraments of the New Law are not necessary for salvation, but superfluous, and that without them or the desire of them a man obtains the grace of justification from God by means of faith alone. Not, the Council adds, that all the Sacraments are necessary for each and every man. The allusion to the "desire" for a Sacrament alludes primarily to "baptism by desire," which is explained in the book on baptism: briefly it means that if a man does not know of baptism, he can (by means of an act of perfect charity, that is, of love of God for his own sake, and of detestation of sin for his sake, with the implied readiness to do all that God might command him, if he knew it) obtain grace and salvation. Similarly, if he knows of baptism, and wishes for it, and cannot obtain *e.g.* anyone to baptise him, or water, he can cleanse his soul from sin, as I have just explained. The "faith" alluded to by the Council means faith as Protestants conceived of it, *i.e.*, trust. The Council further denounces one who should say that Sacraments exist only in order to nourish faith in the recipient. That they do not contain

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the Grace that they signify, or do not confer that grace upon those who interpose no obstacle, as though they were merely external signs of grace or justice, received by means of faith, or were mere marks, as it were, of the Christian profession, whereby believers might be distinguished from unbelievers. Or that Grace is not always given, and to all, so far as God's action goes, even if the Sacrament be duly received; but only sometimes, and to certain persons. (This regards the false Protestant doctrines of predestination, according to which God so predestines certain souls to hell, that no matter what they desire and do, they are not given Grace.) Or that Grace is not given through the Christian Sacraments "ex opere operato," but that sheer trust in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of Grace. That the three Sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Orders, do not impress a "character" on the soul, that is, a spiritual and indelible sign, so that these three Sacraments cannot be reiterated. Or that all Christians have power to celebrate and administer all the sacraments. That the intention at least of doing what the Church does, is not required in the ministers when they celebrate and impart the Sacraments. That a sinful minister, who observes all the essential elements in the celebration or impart-

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ing of a sacrament, yet does not celebrate or impart it at all. Finally, that the traditional Catholic rites, wherewith the sacraments are surrounded, can be despised, omitted, or altered at the whim of any and every pastor.

As for the errors of Modernism, condemned by Pius X, which concern the Sacraments, I have sufficiently indicated their general character. Those which touch upon the nature of Sacraments at large are, that the opinions concerning the origin of Sacraments, entertained by the Fathers of the Council of Trent and doubtless colouring their dogmatic decisions, are very different from those which are now rightly admitted by those who study the history of Christianity. That the Sacraments took their rise from the Apostles and their successors who interpreted some idea or intention of Christ according to the suggestion or impulse of circumstances. That the aim of Sacraments is merely to recall to men's minds the ever-beneficent presence of the Creator.

How such doctrines fly in the face of the traditional Catholic dogma concerning the Sacraments, must by now be clear.

CHAPTER V

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TURNING our eyes back, then, to those brief records of the life of Christ that the four Gospels are, we see that the Eternal Son of God was sent to redeem our race, and to elevate it to an unthinkably lofty state of union with its God, and was sent to do all this as Man, and by means of his manhood. We see that no thing that was in man did he despise: no human element did he fail to make his own. He did not, if I dare say so, just verify in himself the definition of "man," but in every way he lived as man in this our world of human men and women and of all material things. In his teaching he constantly helped himself, and his hearers, by using the things he saw around him for the conveying of his doctrine; and submitted himself not only to the rich and meaningful ritual of the Law, and was circumcised, and went to the Temple feasts, and observed the Pasch, and so forth, but spontaneously, for his own reasons, sought for and carried through an action

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that in his case seems to us almost uncalled-for. He was baptised by John. Thus Christ our Lord was human, and lived as man among men, and used all simple and human things during his life, and caught them up into his own spiritual life, and wove them into his teaching.

Hence we are not surprised to find him saying that we too, his disciples, are to be dipped in water; salvation is to come, not just to him who "believes," but to him who believes and is baptised. If we are surprised at anything herein, it is at the sudden increase of solemnity that invests his words when this topic of baptism arises. When after his resurrection he sends forth his apostles to that world-wide, world-enduring work that he came to inaugurate, he bids them not only to baptise, but to do so in a manner that involves the invocation of the whole of the Most Blessed Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are all knit into this tremendous act; and into it, you would say, all that is, is taken up—man's new birth, that transforms him from being child of earth into son of God, takes place by means of "water and the Spirit," the two in conjunction and co-operation: the new World of Grace is definitely seen in mysterious parallel with that first creation, when the Spirit of God was

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borne over the face of the watery abyss and earth took shape and the world grew into life.

Along with this, at the most solemn hour of all, when he was about to leave the house where for the last time before his Passion he had eaten with the men he loved and chose, he orders them to do what he has just done—to take bread, to bless and break it—to take wine, and to bless it—and then to partake in what has been blessed, because it is his Body and his Blood—Himself. What should be the consequences of entering thus into himself, and receiving himself into us, if not the living by an intertwined life, his and ours? We become “one thing” with him, even as he with the Father is “One Thing.” And if indeed it be true that without the New Birth by water and the Spirit, we cannot be said to live at all from the Christian point of view, so, in his words in the synagogue of Capharnaum, he insists and re-insists that without this eating of his Flesh and drinking of his Blood, we cannot maintain that new life, still less develop it and bring it to its consummation.

There is another moment of exceptional solemnity—when, breathing on his apostles, he tells them that they now possess the Holy Ghost, and adds that the sins they remit, are

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remitted, and the sins that they retain, are likewise retained. Elsewhere, doubtless, he definitely wishes his apostles to give a special, healing, Christian care to the sick; and certainly he insists that the old permission for divorce, dating from Moses, was now to be regarded as over and done with, and indeed become impossible, for it is God, he says, that joins the hands and lives of those who marry.

Sometimes then by solemn declarations, sometimes by gentle hints and suggestions, amplified, it may be, in unrecorded parts of his instruction during those Forty Days after his resurrection when he must have fulfilled his intention of telling them the "many things" that earlier they "could not bear," or, perhaps, left just as hints to men whom his Spirit was going to guide into using even his hints aright—well, by grave asseverations, or by quiet suggestion, he prepared the Apostles for their work, and started them off on that career which was to be theirs, and which was to continue itself in all the Church's history.

Pentecost comes: the Spirit is given, and the Apostolic Age of the Church's history begins. From the outset we see that there is one Gate into that Church—Baptism. "Here is water! What hinders me from being baptised?" asks the convert officer. With-

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out the slightest question, baptism follows upon conversion. This mighty action is installed upon the very highest plane: there is One Baptism just as there are one Faith, one Lord, one God. Into the baptismal laver we descend, just the men to whom our mothers gave life: we come forth therefrom, a New Creation, new-born, Christ-men: our lives are hid in Christ, and in us, Christ lives. And forthwith after Baptism, we see the Apostles again without discussion "laying hands" upon the new Christian, and at once the Holy Ghost is given; and similarly, when men are set apart for the Christian ministry, hands are laid upon them, the Holy Ghost descends, and a permanent gift exists within the man by means of this imposition of hands, so that it can be invoked, and stimulated by the will of him who has received it, for it is always there.

Marriage, too, is declared by Paul to be a mighty "mystery," or symbol: henceforward it is not to be thought of save in terms of Christ and of his Church, between whom Grace has achieved an ineffable espousal; and James, manifestly initiating nothing but setting order in and explaining a rite already familiar and authoritative, bids the sick to be anointed so that sins be forgiven them, and they be saved. And even in life, men can be

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(as St Paul's action with regard to the incestuous Corinthian proves) cut off from the body of the Church, handed over to Satan, and thereafter, on the Apostle's own terms, reinstated.

Finally, yet with paramount dignity, the Breaking of Bread is established among Christians, and Paul leaves us in no doubt as to its meaning. It involves a real participation in the life and sacrifice of Christ, such that the soul, that shares in that Feast unworthily, becomes guilty in regard of the Body and Blood of Christ himself, and sickens to its death. The Eucharist is, in a unique sense, what it signifies.

The Apostles passed: the Christians of the Early Church continued happily—heaven-wise happily in their human-wise tragic conditions—living their Christian life; living in company with Christ, and experiencing his presence, experiencing too those overwhelming gifts of the Spirit that were so necessary in days when there was no other accumulated experience such as we have, of what Christianity means and can do for men; and using in all simplicity the practices that they had been taught to use. For a while there was little enough speculation, though even from the outset they began to draw conclusions—sometimes exaggerated and mistaken ones, as

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when it seems pretty clear that some of St Paul's converts were so impressed by the "life" which they had understood was given by baptism, that they were surprised and almost shocked when a convert died so much as physically, and anyway, felt sure that there must be some method of baptising, by proxy, those who had already died but would, they felt certain, have wished for baptism had they lived. Others soon enough were to surmise that Communion—that "medicine that makes immortal"—must confer even bodily incorruption; and others, again, began to wonder whether the Holy Ghost did not somehow actually take up his dwelling in the baptismal water, and whether the reality in that water were not somehow similar to that veiled beneath the Eucharistic Bread. It will be noticed that all the mistakes lie on the side of *reality*, not of understatement, so very far were they from imagining that the Sacraments were mere ways of suggesting pious thoughts, of evoking faith, and so forth, or that the virtue of the Sacrament was wholly in the well-disposed recipient.

Naturally, the two all-important Sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist, the necessary ingress into the Christian Life, and the unutterably precious "daily bread" of the living soul, were what immediately and outstand-

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ingly occupied the minds of those who had, after all, constantly to make use of the latter when once they had made the vitally necessary use of the former. Naturally, too, I suppose, it was in the Latin half of the Empire—Africa, at any rate—that attention was first notably given to the Sacrament of Penance—that rectification of violated Law. The Romans always understood Law better than the Greeks did; and the lawyer Tertullian, the first Christian thinker who wrote in Latin, began according to his temperament to think this topic out. Doubtless that same temperament, hard and even ferocious at times, caused him to err in his views of the merciful sacrament: still, he rendered great services to those who were, more accurately, to follow him. At first it may seem strange that along with Penance, Confirmation claimed his more close attention. Yet not strange; for Tertullian, personally, and like all good Roman men, was a soldier, and in the vigorous Sacrament he detected something that harmonised with his idea of what a Christian, militant in this antagonistic world, ought to be.

Not much later, another African, Cyprian, again rendered great service to the better elucidation of the Sacraments of Baptism and of Order, because the tendency of his com-

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patriots to split off into a mere nationalist church, forced his attention to all that concerned unity and schism; and so passionate was his abhorrence of the latter, that inevitably he tended to deny to heretics and schismatics powers that they actually possessed, or could possess, those, that is, of ordaining and baptising. Here then the question of who was the due minister of these or of other Sacraments began to get aired, and again, of Intention; and again, the fact of the non-repetition of baptism, confirmation, and orders, if once it could be shown that they had been properly conferred, struck out the clear notion of the sacramental Character or Seal; while the deaths of unbaptised martyrs brought into the open the idea of baptism of blood, and by desire. Even, the tremendous importance seen to belong to the Blessing given by the minister of a Sacrament, to the material element used in it, made a remote preparation for that theory of "matter and form" in Sacraments that was to have so great an historical importance later on.

Thus little by little the thing that Christians had always possessed and serenely made use of, came to be better understood, more clearly described and defined, shielded against abuse, linked up with other parts of the Christian Faith and practice, and to take its

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place within that mighty system of Theology that the ages are still bringing towards perfection.

The colossal figure of St Augustine dominated the imagination of the centuries that succeeded him: he did not complete the theology of the Sacraments: but scattered up and down his works may be found practically all the elements that were to compose it. It was he, perhaps, that brought into prominence the action of Christ himself in the several Sacraments, and who developed the notion of Character, and again, of that revival of Grace of which we spoke, when an obstacle placed by the human will in the way of the fruitful effects of a validly administered Sacrament was at last removed. This cleared up most usefully the problem which confronted those who observed that heretics of a manifestly rebellious sort were ordaining priests, who themselves continued rebellious and ill-disposed. They had felt it was all or nothing—either these ordinations were valid, and then it looked as if a contumacious rebel could confer grace upon another contumacious rebel; or, that the ordination was not valid at all, and must be repeated when the heretic was converted. In its measure this problem had affected Confirmation too and even Baptism. However, the explana-

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tion that a Sacrament could indeed be valid and therefore produce the Character, although grace was excluded so long as the obstacle remained, solved the difficulty, which returned however, when in the bad centuries of Europe the reformation of incontinent clergy which had obtained its ecclesiastical position by simony had to be thought of. The practical question of whether these men had to be reordained when they repented can be solved along Augustinian lines without much difficulty.¹

As I said, the theology of St Augustine contained in itself practically all the elements of a complete treatise upon the Sacraments. Not much was left to do but to co-ordinate them. When therefore all the elements which composed a Sacrament in the strict sense were set before the eyes, it was easily enough seen that seven rites, and no more nor less, contained them all. Hence we are not to be surprised when we find that a writer so far forward in the Church's history as Peter Lombard (c. 1150) was the first definitely to catalogue the Sacraments as Seven. Other rites were seen to approximate to them, and to contain some but not all of

¹ There are theologians who suggest that *all* the Sacraments give grace that revives when an obstacle, set by sinful will, is removed.

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the requisite elements, and could be called with greater or less accuracy Sacramentals, but not Sacraments.

I think it may safely be said that after the Middle Ages little more that was constructive in sacramental theology was done. Certain points were cleared up—the distinction between the *opus operatum* and the *opus operantis* was made explicit; the kind of causality brought into play when a Sacrament was described as “causing” Grace was thought out, and so forth. Since then what has really happened has been that the history of the several Sacraments has been far more closely studied, and the Catholic theory has been defended against attacks far more vigorous and definite than the old ones were. For of course the religious revolution of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with its claim to reinstate Christ in the position from which the cultus of Saints, ritual, sacerdotalism, the Papal authority, and so forth were said to have dislodged him, did all that it could to discredit the Catholic doctrine with regard to Sacraments in particular. If you had to find one word in which to crystallise the Catholic sacramental tradition, I think it would be “Efficacy.” The Sacraments are, as we see, efficacious of themselves. It was this that the Reformers attacked. A Sacrament was an

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absolutely inert thing. They could not eliminate all the Sacraments (as a matter of fact, the Quakers did, as the Salvation Army today also does), but they got rid of five out of the seven, and then stripped the two that remained of any intrinsic value or force. The whole "work" was done by the recipient. He arrived with that trust in God to which the word "faith" was attached, and on the grounds of that faith, good was accomplished within him. At least this much credit has to be done to the Reformers—they believed in certain fundamental things, such as sin and grace, forgiveness and salvation, to which modern creeds pay practically no attention at all. None the less, the Reformation was the immediate ancestor of that scepticism which today pervades almost everything religious, and has succeeded in making modern non-Catholics forget, above all, anything connected with the dogma of the Supernatural as such. But, as we saw, the Sacraments have no meaning save on the Supernatural plane.

Catholics may well be grateful for the institution by our Lord Jesus Christ of those Seven Sacraments that we have been speaking of. We have had once or twice to look aside from the Catholic doctrine to those alien systems, or that alien chaos, that confronts

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all that we mean by the Sacramental System. We can afford to smile when non-Catholics talk of "meaningless" or "magical" rites, and we need not retort with gibes of "subjectivism," for not only are all gibes, directed even to the most mistaken of honest and sincere men, out of place, but they have practically come to be off the point, for, save among Catholics, there is today very little theory about Sacraments at all, and less and less use of them or of their substitutes.

As always, this doctrine carries us back to the love of God for man. Why, unless God had loved us, should he have willed so much as to offer us the gift of Supernatural Life, and why, save again because he loved us, should he have willed to restore to us that life, once our race had lost it through sin? Well, he did decree to restore us to the place from which the race, in Adam, had fallen; and that restoration was not to be done as it were in some technical way, as though, for example, God taught us just how to make a "good act of contrition," and thereupon pronounced us once again his sons. The redemption and restoration of mankind was to be done through God's eternal Son taking our human flesh so as to knit up our nature with his divine nature into one person, Jesus Christ. This torrential invasion of God's

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love makes any sacramental doctrine we may proceed to tell of, quite "natural," since never can the Sacraments catch up, in their tender intimacy, with that tremendous and total approach of God in human guise. Or is there a way in which one of them, at least, so catches up? I suggest it in a moment. At any rate, God has entered our world as man, and in a sense, Christ himself can be called the Supreme Sacrament, since his humanity veils, yet is the vehicle of, his invisible divinity, and through that Humanity the eternal God energises and does his work in our souls if we but make use of him.

But, after all, Jesus Christ our Lord no longer treads this earth. He has left it, and "sits ever at the right hand of the Father." Yet would he not leave us desolate and without himself. In that visible-invisible Society which the Church is, he continues himself, and in the Church lives and teaches and rules and gives life to the world.

But that Church, like her Head, has never preached some chill doctrine of the salvation of our souls such that we must think that our bodies are of no interest or value. We are and ever hereafter shall be true men, body-soul, however much our bodies shall be perfected and exalted by glory. And in many ways, though in seven chief and special ways,

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Grace, that is the germ of glory, reaches us, and all of these ways most mercifully take into account our bodies as well as our souls. Simple elements are taken up by Christ, and are made the visible part in those transactions through which we appropriate salvation. For ever, henceforward, Water must be regarded by us with awe and affection, since Christ has used it in his Sacrament of Baptism. Drowning and barren water has become that which washes from us all spiritual stain, and that from which we ascend, new-born sons to God. He takes that ancient gift of Oil, in which our forefathers saw so many hints of the richness and grace of God, and anoints and consecrates us by its means—anoints our youth, that it may be strong for God and joyous in God; anoints the men who are to be priests, the royal priests, of God Most High; anoints too those sick who stand in such special need of consolation and spiritual power. Is there not a quite special tenderness in the fact that the Sacrament of Marriage takes—not, this time, some non-human element, but the human action and will of two human beings who should love one another and who desire to join in building up that true vital cell of the full human life, which a home is? The contract that these two freely enter upon, is the very stuff of

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God's Sacrament; and, again a special delicacy of his goodness, it is these same two, the man and the woman, who are ministers of this Sacrament, and give to one another the Grace of Christ. For my part, I cannot but see once more in the Sacrament of Penance a great revelation of the gentle "homeliness" of our Lord, since here too he refrains from introducing some alien material on to which the divine forgiveness may descend and in which it may operate. Here too the material element in the Sacrament consists in human acts—in the acts of that very penitent who might be thinking that he was not so much as worthy to enter into the house of his Father, nor lift up his head in the presence of his offended God. No. God calls him to his side, bids him confess his sins, and then uses the acts of contrition and resolution, as of confession, nay, uses the very sins themselves that the penitent has spread forth before him as that wherein his healing Grace may work.

But it is the Eucharist beyond which the inventiveness of God's humble love could not proceed. God takes, once more, the simple elements of Bread and Wine, and, this time, not only becomes as it were their partner in the sacramental work, but, leaving only their appearance for the sake of our poor senses,

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transubstantiates their reality into his most real Self, so that the Gift here is the Giver; the means have become the End. We are given, not a memory, not a hope; not a metaphor, not an instrument, but himself.

We shall then be wise to practise *living* as it were upon this Sacramental principle. We shall seek ever to look below the surface. We shall see in all nature traces of God's presence and of his power. We shall reverently anticipate, as it were, the Church, by creating "sacramentals" for our own use, by seeking to see God in all things, and above all in our fellow-men, by worshipping him there—for there indeed and of necessity he is—and by drawing thence his reward, which is grace, love, and truth. But this is matter for our private devotion; and though we are wise to keep that devotion in the framework, so to say, of the Church's sanctioned ideas, yet we shall be wisest of all to recall continually those great Sacraments that we have received and can receive no more—Baptism, that opened every grace to us: Confirmation, that established in us that Christian Character owing to which we can call on the Indwelling Spirit, as by right, to succour us: and above all we shall be wise and acting rightly if we make the maximum of use of the two great Sacraments of penance and of

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the Eucharist, wherefrom we draw sure and certain healing if we are sick, even if we are spiritually sick to death, and increase of soul's health and strength if, as God grant, there be life in our souls and sin be absent from them.

Finally, we shall pray for those who know nothing of these Sacraments: we shall pray that all men and women now alive may make those acts of faith and contrition upon which all the rest of the spiritual life is built (for they involve, too, charity), and we shall ask that as many as possible may pass from the realm of desire and what is but implicit, to the full, conscious, deliberate and most joyous appropriation of all the riches of our God.

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